

Prison

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is God."

The elder Gonzales, an east side school bus driver originally from Mexico, along with other members of the Gonzales family, would not comment further.

But James A. "Andy" Collins, the director of Texas' prison system, suggested Gonzales' family should not be overly worried.

"I can't remember off-hand anytime in my career when we had a serious problem because of somebody's law enforcement background," said Collins, who has worked in the state's prison system for nearly 20 years.

The state of Texas, as well as the federal government and Harris County, use classification or segregation systems to protect former peace officers.

For example, the "stereotypical 90-pound weakling" would be provided sleeping quarters with some one of comparable size, one prison official said. Special measures are taken to separate homosexuals and gang members. The classification system used by the state includes the "safekeeping" status and the more restrictive "administrative segregation."

"We do that (provide extra protection) for other people, it's not just law enforcement officers," said Collins. "You always have to do that with attorneys. They've basically got the same problems, especially if they were involved in criminal law (and represented someone who may want to retaliate against them)."

"We try to look at every individual situation and his background to see if anything he was doing in his life is going to impact his confinement here, because we don't want a problem."

Another state official said sometimes it's better to emphasize the anonymity of former officers and let them mix and sort of melt into the general population. Placing them in safekeeping or other special protective care could result in them being stigmatized and being identified, said the official, who asked to remain anonymous.

Collins acknowledged that Gonzales could have "a hell of a problem" if he was put in the wrong prison unit. "You put him with younger, more volatile inmates, who are doing long sentences and happen to be from the Harris County area, yeah, that guy probably would have a problem," Collins said. "But we're not going to do that."

Interviews with inmates indicated a need exists for extra care for former peace officers.

"Police officers are in more danger than others — they're right down there with baby rapers," said death row prisoner James Beathard, 33.

One of his colleagues is former Amarillo policeman James Vanderbilt, who's under a death sentence for the 1975 abduction and murder of Katrina Moyer, the 16-year-old daughter of former state Rep. Hudson Moyer and his wife, Nancy.

According to Beathard, Vanderbilt was subjected to "a lot of bad attitudes and a lot of threats" when he was first imprisoned 15 years ago. While a few condemned killers "still hold it against him for having been a cop," Beathard says Vanderbilt is in less danger on death row than he

would be in the prison's general population.

Another inmate said he doesn't believe that former peace officers are in any real danger, unless he was being retaliated against by a particular inmate. The inmate, who did not want to be identified, said "some (inmates) said they would like to stick it to them (peace officers), but it was more or less boasting."

Chris Flood, an attorney who represented a Houston police officer recently handed a 99-year prison term for raping a teen-ager and robbing her boyfriend, contends the state system for protecting officers is "responsive rather than prophylactic."

"Trustees have ways of getting ahold of information in working in different facets of the jail, which is quickly passed on to some of the more influential prisoners in jail," said Flood, whose client is former officer Harold Burkett. "I know this sounds like a movie, but it's true. There's nothing really — other than the attempt to maintain his anonymity — that keeps him safe."

A former Houston police officer, who served time in a federal prison camp, said that within a day inmates learned of his former occupation. "I had to stay on my guard all the time," said the former officer, who did not want to be named.

"The only thing that the prison staff does is control the entrances and exits to the prison. So, you have your own city within the city being run by the inmates. They control the records."

The former officer said he was verbally harassed during confinement but never assaulted.

"Where I went to was nothing but a scum-bag facility. Everybody seems to think that federal facilities are the Holiday Inns of the judicial system," he said.

A former chief deputy, who also did not want to be named, said that he was never harassed during the 18 months he spent in federal penitentiaries because other inmates did not know that he had been a peace officer.

"You learn to protect your own butt, you know. There's no law that says you have to tell them you are a peace officer. Some people run their mouth," he said. "I learned a long time ago that that is not the thing to do in any business."

Three former Houston police officers serving time in the state penitentiary were contacted about this story. They declined to comment.

Except to say that relatively few inmates have law enforcement backgrounds, neither the state of Texas nor the federal government was able to say how many peace officers are incarcerated. (Texas currently has more than 40,000 inmates behind bars and the federal government has about 56,000 federal prisoners nationwide.)

At the same time, there appears to be a significant number of law enforcement personnel being incarcerated. In a letter written late last year, Harris County District Attorney John B. Holmes recounted "just from memory" the prosecution of 26 people in law enforcement.

Smyth said new ground is being broken in the prosecution of people in law enforcement "and giving them the same kind of punishment that a citizen in the same position would get."

Chronicle reporter Kathy Fair contributed to this report.



John Davenport / Chronicle

Faster than a speeding bullet?

Olympic gold medalist Carl Lewis clowns around during the Houston Summit Sprint Sunday by brandishing the starting pistol at his sister, Carol,

left. Lewis was on hand to sign autographs at the children's one-kilometer race, which started at Polk and Louisiana streets.

Pasadena approves bond issue; Magnolia votes against college

Houston Chronicle

Pasadena voters approved a bond referendum for \$60 million in major infrastructure work and an expansion of city facilities, but Magnolia school voters nixed joining the North Harris County College District.

The two votes were among numerous issues decided in area elections Saturday.

In Pasadena, all 11 propositions in the city's largest-ever bond election passed easily — some by 3-1 margins.

The bonds will fund street improvements, an asphalt overlay program, water-sewer improvements, a major overhaul of the Golden Acres sewage treatment plant, along with a new municipal court, public library annex and police substation.

Voters in the Magnolia Independent School District voted 347-295 against a proposal to join the North Harris County College District.

Opponents said the benefits wouldn't outweigh an added tax burden.

In La Marque, voters approved three propositions, including raising the sales tax from 7 to 8 cents and giving firefighters the right to bargain collectively.

Seabrook voters approved nine charter amendments mostly designed to conform to state laws.

Voters in Dayton in Liberty County balloted 706-176 against renaming Cleveland Street, one of the town's main arteries, after Martin Luther King.

In Hilshire Village, a petition to roll back taxes to last year's rate — 39 cents per \$100 of assessed value — was defeated 202 to 64. The rate will remain 52 cents.

La Porte voters approved 2-1 a charter amendment requiring the city to seek bids on purchases ex-

ceeding \$5,000, instead of \$3,000 as under the old rule.

Stafford voters approved \$5.4 million in bonds for municipal school district improvements.

Alvin voters approved four of five proposed charter changes. They approved changing the title of the city secretary to city clerk, allotting citizens to be heard for five minutes during budget hearings, clarifying that the correction of errors in assessment, tax rolls or tax statements must conform to state law and adding a section allowing zoning and land use controls.

A proposal to expand the use of sales tax funds to beautification projects involving streets and drainage was defeated 553-375.

In Pearland, voters approved eight propositions, including one changing the terms "he" and "his" in the city charter to "he/she" or "his/ hers" and "councilman" to "council member."

Voters approved propositions clarifying that council members cannot hold paid positions in city government while in office; allowing council to bypass reading aloud ordinances and resolutions provided that copies are made available; allowing the appointment of a court clerk by the city manager and outlining the clerk's duties; changing the term City Health Officer to City Health Authority; calling for city elections the first Saturday in May; requiring candidates for city office to file applications at least 45 days prior to the election; and requiring the city secretary to give notice of runoff elections.

Freeport voters decided against allowing non-resident lawyers to serve as city judge or city attorney.

Freeport voted to abandon settling elections by a plurality vote and agreed to set up a system for runoff

elections when no one receives a majority vote. Voters also changed the city charter to conform with state law regarding debts owed to the city by candidates for city office.

Lake Jackson voters turned down a proposal to abolish a requirement that City Council members be property owners. Voters upped the monthly compensation of council members from \$37.50 a month to \$75.

Also passed was a proposal requiring that meeting minutes reflect the reason given for dispensing with the second reading of a proposed ordinance before its adoption. Voters also agreed to transfer the Traffic Commission from city ordinance provisions to the charter and to hold referendum elections on dates prescribed by state law rather than the current practice of holding elections 30 days after the submission of petitions forcing such elections.

Sugar Land voters passed six charter amendments, including restructuring the council's district and at-large representation and defining the city manager's responsibilities regarding council meetings, department head appointments and the budget.

Other amendments include redefining the authority of the city and its council to conform with legislative changes and the existing council-manager form of government, redefining council member qualifications and post-annexation district boundaries and redefining notice requirements for referendum and claims purposes.

Also approved were amendments to redefine the authority and duties of commissions involved in planning and zoning and to lengthen the interval between charter review commission appointments.

Election

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date for mayor, Myrna Davis, 53, died of a sudden illness two days before the election. Residents cast 237 votes for her Saturday. Alderman Karen Huff said the board of aldermen will appoint a mayor for a one-year term.

Huff said the residents cast the votes, partly as a show of support for Davis' family, and partly because there was not enough time before the election for anyone to launch a write-in campaign.

In Liberty County, voters ousted an incumbent mayor by electing a write-in candidate. Two other races — which had no official candidates on the ballot — also were won by write-in candidates.

Incumbent Daisetta Mayor William "Bill" Bachman, an emergency medical technician, was defeated by former mayor Pat Abshier, who received 117 write-in votes. Bachman received 31 votes.

In Dayton Lake Estates an incumbent councilman, Rick Stears, mounted a write-in campaign for the mayor's job, garnering 27 votes to win. Council will appoint a replacement for his council seat.

Also, write-in candidate Roy

Stubbs will fill the marshal's job after slipping past another write-in candidate, Mike Stubblefield, by a 17-16 vote. One other candidate, Paul Chalfoux, received one vote. Despite the close election, city secretary Kay Strong said a runoff was not planned — unless one of the candidates requested it.

In Ames, a council seat vacated by three-time incumbent James Hebert, whose job made it difficult to attend council meetings, will be filled by write-in candidate, Raymond Donatto.

Chronicle reporters Cindy Horswell and Ruth Piller contributed to this report.

Tarrant County rejects crime-fighting sales tax

FORT WORTH (AP) — Tarrant County voters overwhelmingly rejected a proposed half-cent increase in the sales tax to pay for a crime-fighting district that would have been the first of its kind in the nation.

The vote on the proposed Tarrant County Crime Control and Prevention District was 9,179 votes, or 29 percent for, and 22,784 votes, or 71 percent, against.

Advocates touted the crime district as a means of dissolving invisible boundaries between governmental agencies and a way of linking private organizations involved in the battle against crime.

But the plan drew opposition from

two separate fronts — conservatives opposed to a tax increase, and minority groups who said the plan wouldn't be an improvement.

Conservative opponents sent out letters last week and handed out cards at polling places telling voters, "Your taxes are about to go up!"

The crime-fighting tax would have raised an estimated \$45 million a year for police, courts, education, crime prevention, punishment and rehabilitation programs.

Some of the money would have paid for four new criminal district courts in Fort Worth; a state-of-the-art computerized fingerprint identification system to be shared by all

police agencies in the county; a "boot camp" for young first-time criminal offenders; and several other community jails.

Also proposed were drug education and treatment programs and expanded citizen crime-prevention programs.

Tarrant County Judge Roy English said the crime district plan "probably should have been directed more toward hard costs and equipment." English, a chairman of a board of city and county officials who put together the plan, pushed for law enforcement-oriented programs in early discussions.

John Wayne statue gets a new look

DALLAS (AP) — The bronzed likeness of The Duke is back in Texas after eight weather-beaten years in California.

But the statue of John Wayne has only returned to the Hoka Hey Fine Arts Foundry and Gallery near Dublin for cosmetic reasons.

The foundry cast the statue in 1982, and now, after facing the elements outside the John Wayne Airport in Orange County, Calif., it is being moved to a new terminal building this summer.

It will be inside an atrium where it will be under sunlight during the day and spotlights at night.

That requires a new look. And eight years underneath the open skies has given the once reddish-brown bronze a dusty gray finish.

The only bronze color showing was its right hand where people had touched it on their way into the airport.

"Probably a lot of photographs out there in the world are of people shaking his hand," said Wade Cowan of the Hoka Hey foundry and gallery. Bronze statues that are exposed to the elements don't age evenly "until they get like 100 years old, and finally they just turn green like the Statue of Liberty," Summers said.

In a room at the back of the Hoka Hey gallery, all 9 feet, 2 inches of bronze now looks almost lifelike with its new coloring.

Lawmakers

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head of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee, has said he thinks even the governor would support a tax increase rather than taking money from rich school districts.

But Clements could simply veto the education bill. Its structure is similar to the one he criticized and indirectly killed Tuesday, the last day of the last 30-day special session.

The governor immediately called lawmakers into a third session that started Wednesday.

The Senate Education Committee has approved a measure similar to the House's, and it could be taken up Monday by the full Senate.

Like the House bill, the Senate bill would require a separate spending measure and so would go directly to Clements if passed by the Legislature. But the Senate school reform bill wouldn't take effect unless at least \$555 million in new state revenue also was provided.

Although Clements pushed a \$250 million, no-new-taxes, education plan, it was criticized by lawmakers who questioned whether it could — or should — be funded with budget cuts and by raising the state fee for obtaining driving records.

Meanwhile, the June 1 deadline for reform set by State District Judge Scott McCown is looming.

If, by the deadline, lawmakers and Clements don't write a plan sending more money to property-poor schools, McCown is appointing a court master who will devise one for them.

The \$13.5 billion-a-year school finance system relies on a combination of state aid, local property taxes and some federal money.

Protest

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country. Only the upper middle-income population is using tobacco less, he said.

"What we try to do is kill the camel so to speak," Blum said about the purpose of the demonstration Sunday. "Our motto is 'Laughing the pushers out of town.'"

Blum questions identifying DOC as an anti-smoking organization. If anything, he said, it is anti-cancer, anti-high medical costs and anti-heart disease.

Woman kills father during altercation

A woman abused by her father for several years shot and killed him during an altercation at her northeast Harris County home, authorities said Sunday.

They said Leon Kroll, 46, went to his daughter's home in the 11800 block of Spicewood about 7 p.m. Saturday and began quarreling with her boyfriend.

The daughter, Michelle Kroll, 22, got a shotgun and ordered her father to leave. He lunged toward her, she said, and she fired, hitting him once in the chest.

The woman told investigators she had suffered several years of abuse by her father, and had filed a restraining order against him after she moved from his home.

However, investigators said, the father continued to harass her to return.

The slaying will be referred to a Harris County grand jury without charges.

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